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## LOVE.

LOVE is such an old, old story, and so much that is good and expressive has been written and sung about it, that we feel rather scared on approaching the subject. But it is one that will bear constant re-inspection; it can never be exhausted; it possesses the secret of perpetual youth; for it plays so important a part in the state of our existence, whether that be one of happiness or unhappiness, that our interest in it can never be abated. In all phases of our life we are subject to be affected by it in its various forms; and even if we restrict its meaning to that special form of affection which is generally understood by it, we shall find that its interest to us is perennial. In early youth, as we stand on the threshold of life, ere yet we dare to enter the lists of love ourselves, and when the sly allusion brings the hot blood with a rush of colour to our face, we still observe the feats of others with not a little curiosity. Unconsciously, we are gaining, by storing up the experiences of others, the education which is preparing us for the fatal hour when we shall have to take our stand amongst the doomed victims of Cupid.

Later on, what is life to us but a great ocean of love? No longer do we stand outside; but, happy and joyous, we bathe ourselves in its sweet and impalpable essences. It is the medium through which impressions of the external world reach our senses; and hence life is beautiful and bright to us. The reluctant youth may hang back; but at that age he cannot but have many a glimpse of the truth—of the reality of love—of that ethereal influence which pervades the whole universe, and gives to man the key to by far the greatest portion of the pleasures of life. In moments of vague, thrilling disquiet, he will feel it; as he springs up and returns the bounding tennis-ball and meets a glance from that flashing eye opposite—as he whirls round a ballroom in the undulating curves of the waltz, and at moments when the music

seems to become almost human in its pathos and expression, and he feels uncomfortably conscious of some extraordinary change in his constitution, and wonders what is the matter, and pales and trembles. And when we have finished with the juvenile part of love's warfare, we yet take pleasure in looking on at the mischievous little god tormenting the youngsters, as he once used to torment us, and chuckle and fight our own battles over again, and compare notes. Thus love is always interesting to us, not merely as far as our experiences go, but also as it affects others.

On the nature of love, there have been many wise and learned disquisitions; but the only practical solution of the question we can arrive at is, that it is an attachment, a yearning experienced by one person for another; and this yearning, strange to say, seems not to be dependent on any special characteristic of the person loved. It is a terrible force, as every one knows—one that governs the world—one that is capable of making a human being superlatively happy both in the present and in the future of this life; and on the other hand, one to which many a human being can trace his or her lifelong misery and eventual destruction.

This is a terrible consideration, and one which it is worth our while to pause and think over; for the truth is that we have no control over that force, which, when once aroused, lays us at the mercy of some one else, and makes this other person the arbiter of our fate. We cannot decide by an effort of the will that we shall love such and such a person, and not fall in love with such and such another person. If the love be unreturned, we shall probably find it easier to control our own feelings; for usually then our inborn pride rises, and makes us assume an individuality and independence which is incompatible with the state of dependence on the feelings of another which is a natural concomitant of love. But it is absurd to say that in all cases love unreturned dies. If the love be returned, then we think it highly improbable that any other considera-

tions will influence it. Thus, many a refined man has been madly in love with a woman whom he has known to possess qualities which, under other conditions, would have shocked him. But they don't influence him—he is hardly conscious of them; his love is returned, and that is all he cares for. Has not every one met with cases in which a girl falls in love with a man, and still continues loving him—supposing her love to be returned—even after she has found out that he is a villain? In fact, we may lay it down as a general rule, that love once aroused, and returned, is only in very rare cases capable of being controlled. This will not be difficult to understand, when we bear in mind that love is a single and distinct feeling, as distinct and single a feeling as either admiration or respect, and not a mixture of feelings, as many people suppose, and as the ordinary language leads one to infer. And just as respect for a person may exist without admiration, so love can exist independently of either admiration or respect. There need not even exist admiration of personal beauty, for many cases could be cited where women have fallen in love with ugly men having no acquisitions of any kind.

This opens a very grave question, one of such serious importance to all of us as to be quite appalling. Yes, my dear young friend, the constitution of your nature is such that you are quite capable of falling in love with a girl who may be worthless, capable of being so carried away by this love as to marry her, and capable also of suffering for your mistake. You may simply have your life blighted, your good-nature and high spirit turned to cynicism and sour irritability, and hurried even to an untimely death. Such also may be your fate, sweet maiden, with that face yet wreathed in smiles—seemingly made for nothing but joy and happiness.

It is sad to think, and still sadder to know, that every year this holds true far too often. Are we perfectly helpless, then, in the face of nature? Does she offer us no remedy for this terrible state of things? How can we be considered responsible—how can we be made thus to suffer for what seems so entirely beyond our control? That is a question often asked, and one which, if we continue merely asking it, will never be answered for us. Nature deigns not to answer our questions; her laws and methods are continually operating, and we have not to ask, but to learn and act thereby. If in this case we set ourselves to learn by the experience of others, we shall soon come to see a rent in the cloud—to feel gradually that even in this case we have to some extent the power of guiding our fate—of, at anyrate, averting disaster.

Now, then, what is love? We have been treating this question superficially; but let us go deeper. Why do you love your wife, my friend? Is it for her beauty? There are many women more beautiful than she; you have seen them, and yet you do not love them. Is it for her talents? There are many women more talented than she; you have known them, and yet you do not love them. No, you answer, rather bewildered; you do not know why you love her—only, somehow, she fits in with you. We are now getting a little closer. She fits in with you. Now, let us see why you did not love those other women.

You can't exactly say; but, somehow, they did not seem to fit in with you; there was something dissonant in your characters. We are now closer still to the solution of the question—in fact, we seem to see it. There seems to have been some sympathy, some power of receptivity in your mind or character for another mind or character of a certain type. When you met your wife, you recognised in her physiognomy, in her gait, in her manner of talking, in fact in all her external qualities, the indications of the counterpart of your own mind. Then there was an upheaval of your being towards hers; and this made itself conscious to you through the sensation of love. You were yourself totally unable to say why you loved her; most men are little acquainted with the true springs and motives of their actions.

It certainly lies within our power to influence and change to some degree our character. And here lies the solution of the difficulty; for by so modifying our character as to make it instinctively friendly and partial to the good and virtuous and such qualities as insure our happiness, we would be preparing a receptivity for a nature which would not disappoint our expectations. But not only must we have that receptivity, but we must also possess the power to recognise such a nature in others—to avoid mistake. If we were able to read other people's characters, and were also perfectly virtuous ourselves, we should be very unlikely to make a mistake; for the reading of a person's character in such a case must be instantaneous, instinctive. Such perfection it is impossible to attain, and hence all people are liable to err; but he that understands and acts on these considerations is less likely to be mistaken.

## THIS MORTAL COIL.

### CHAPTER VIII.—THE ROADS DIVIDE.

ON the second morning, true to promise, the watch arrived by the early post; and Hugh took it up with pride to the Hall, to bestow it in a casual way upon poor breathless and affectionate Elsie. He took it up for a set purpose. He would show these purse-proud landed aristocrats that his cousin could sport as good a watch any day as their own daughter. The Massingers themselves had been landed aristocrats—not presumably purse-proud in their own day in dear old Devonshire; but the estates had disappeared in houses and port and riotous living two generations since; and Hugh was now proving in his own person the truth of the naïf old English adage—'When land is gone and money spent, then learning is most excellent.' Journalism is a poor sort of trade in its way, but at anyrate an able man can earn his bread and salt at it somehow. Hugh didn't grudge those twenty-five guineas: he regarded them, as he regarded his poems, in the light of a valuable long investment. They were a sort of indirect double bid for the senior Meyseys' respect and for Winifred's fervent admiration. When a man is paying attentions to a pretty girl, there's nothing on earth he desires so much as to appear in her eyes lavishly generous. A less abstruse philosopher, however, might

perhaps have bestowed his generosity direct upon Winifred *in propria persona*: Hugh, with his subtler calculation of long odds and remote chances, deemed it wiser to display it in the first instance obliquely upon Elsie. This was an acute little piece of psychological play. A man who can make a present like that to a poor cousin, with whom he stands upon a purely cousinly footing, must be, after all, not only generous, but a ripping good fellow into the bargain. How would he not comport himself under similar circumstances to the maiden of his choice, and to the wife of his bosom?

Elsie took the watch, when Hugh produced it, with a little cry of delight and surprise; then, looking at the initials so hastily engraved in neat Lombardic letters on the back, the tears rose to her eyes irrepressibly as she said with a gentle pressure of his hand in hers: 'I know now, Hugh, what that telegram was about the other morning. How very, very kind and good of you to think of it.—But I almost wish you hadn't given it to me. I shall never forgive myself for having said before you I should like one the same sort as Winifred's. I'm quite ashamed of your having thought I meant to hint at it.'

'Not at all,' Hugh answered, with just the faintest possible return of her gentle pressure. 'I was twisting it over in my own mind what on earth I could ever find to give you. I thought first of a copy of my last little volume; but then that's nothing—I'm only too sensible myself of its small worth. A book from an author is like spoiled peaches from a market-gardener: he gives them away only when he has a glut of them. So, when you said you'd like a watch of the same sort as Miss Meysey's, it seemed to me a perfect interposition of chance on my behalf. I knew what to get, and I got it at once. I'm only glad those London watchmaker fellows, whose respected name I've quite forgotten, had time to engrave your initials on it.'

'But, Hugh, it must have cost you such a mint of money.'

Hugh waved a deprecatory hand with airy magnificence over the broad shrubbery. 'A mere trifle,' he said, as one who could command thousands. 'It came just to the exact sum the *Contemporary* paid me for that last article of mine on "The Future of Marriage." (Which was quite true, the article in question having run to precisely twenty-five pages, at the usual honorarium of a guinea a page.) 'It took me a few hours, only, to dash it off.' (Which was scarcely so accurate, it not being usual for even the most abandoned or practised of journalists to 'dash off' articles for a leading review; and the mere physical task of writing twenty-five pages of solid letterpress being considerably greater than most men, however rapid their pens, could venture to undertake in a few hours.)

Winifred looked up at him with a timid glance. 'It's a lovely watch,' she said, taking it over with an admiring look from Elsie: 'and the inscription makes it ever so much nicer. One would prize it, of course, for that alone. But if I'd been Elsie, I'd a thousand times rather have had a volume of poems, with the author's autograph dedication, than all the watches in all England.'

'Would you?' Hugh answered with an amused smile. 'You rate the autographs of a living

versifier immensely above their market value. Even Tennyson's may be bought at a shop in the Strand, you know, for a few shillings. I feel this is indeed fame. I shall begin to grow conceited soon at this rate.—And by the way, Elsie, I've brought you a little bit of verse too. Your Laureate has not forgotten or neglected his customary duty. I shall expect a butt of sack in return for these: or may I venture to take it out instead in nectar?' They stood all three behind a group of syringa bushes. He touched her lips with his own lightly as he spoke. 'Many happy returns of the day—as a cousin,' he added, laughing.—'And now, what's your programme for the day, Elsie?'

'We want you to row us up the river to Snade, if it's not too hot, Hugh,' his pretty cousin responded, all blushes.

'Tuus, O Regina, quid optes, Explorare labor; mihi jussa capessere fas est,' Hugh quoted merrily. 'That's the best of talking to a Girtton girl, you see. You can fire off your most epigrammatic Latin quotation at her, as it rises to your lips, and she understands it. How delightful that is, now. As a rule, my Latin quotations, which are frequent and free, as Truthful James says, besides being neat and appropriate, like after-dinner speeches, fall quite flat upon the stony ground of the feminine intelligence—which last remark, I flatter myself, in the matter of mixed metaphor, would do credit to Sir Boyle Roche in his wildest flights of Hibernian eloquence. I made a lovely Latin pun at a picnic once. We had some chicken and ham sausage—a great red German sausage of the polony order, in a sort of huge boiled-lobster-coloured skin; and towards the end of lunch, somebody asked me for another slice of it. "There isn't any," said I. "It's all gone. Finis Poloniae!" Nobody laughed. They didn't know that "Finis Poloniae" were the last words uttered by a distinguished patriot and soldier, "when Freedom shrieked as Kosciuszko fell." That comes of firing off your remarks, you see, quite above the head of your respected audience.'

'But what does that mean that you just said this minute to Elsie?' Winifred asked doubtfully.

'What! A lady in these latter days who doesn't talk Latin!' Hugh cried, with pretended rapture. 'This is too delicious! I hardly expected such good fortune. I shall have the well-known joy, then, of explaining my own feeble little joke, after all, and grimly translating my own poor quotation. It means: "Thy task it is, O Queen, to state thy will: Mine, thy behests to serve, for good or ill." Rough translation, not necessarily intended for publication, but given merely as a guarantee of good faith, as the newspapers put it. Æolus makes the original remark to Juno in the first *Æneid*, when he's just about to raise the wind—literally, not figuratively—on her behalf, against the unfortunate Trojans. He was then occupying the same post, as clerk of the weather, that is now filled jointly by the correspondent of the *New York Herald* and Mr Robert Scott of the Meteorological Office. I hope they'll send us no squalls to-day, if you and Mrs Meysey are going to come with us up the river.'

On their way to the boat, Hugh stopped a

moment at the inn to write hastily another telegram. It was to his London publisher: 'Please, kindly send a copy of *Echoes from Callimachus* by first post to my address as under.' And in five minutes more, the telegram despatched, they were all rowing up stream in a merry party toward Snade meadows. Hugh's plan of campaign was now finally decided. He had nothing to do but to carry out in detail his siege operations.

In the meadows, he had ten minutes or so alone with Winifred. 'Why, Mr Massinger,' she said with a surprised look, 'was it you, then, who wrote that lovely article, in the *Contemporary*, on "The Future of Marriage," we've all been reading?'

'I'm glad you liked it,' Hugh answered with evident pleasure; 'and I suppose it's no use now trying any longer to conceal the fact that I was indeed the culprit.'

'But there's another name to it,' Winifred murmured in reply. 'And Mamma thought it must be Mr Stone, the novelist.'

'Habitual criminals are often wrongly suspected,' Hugh answered with a languid laugh. 'I didn't put my own name to it, however, because I was afraid it was a trifle sentimental, and I hate sentiment. Indeed, to say the truth—it was a cruel trick, perhaps, but I imitated many of Stone's little mannerisms, because I wanted people to think it was really Stone himself who wrote it. But for all that, I believe it all—every word of it, I assure you, Miss Meysey.'

'It was a lovely article,' Winifred cried, enthusiastically. 'Papa read it, and was quite enchanted with it. He said it was so sensible—just what he's always thought about marriage himself, though he never could get anybody else to agree with him. And I liked it too, if you won't think it dreadfully presumptuous of a girl to say so. I thought it took such a grand, beautiful, ethereal point of view, all up in the clouds, you know, with no horrid earthy materialism or nonsense of any sort to clog and spoil it. I think it was splendid, all that you said about its being treason to the race to take account of wealth or position, or prospects or connections, or any other worldly consideration, in choosing a husband or wife for one's self—and that one ought rather to be guided by instinct alone, because instinct—or love, as we call it—was the voice of nature speaking within us.—Papa said that was beautifully put. And I thought it was really true as well. I thought it was just what a great prophet would have said if he were alive to say it; and that the man who wrote it'—She paused, breathless, partly because she was quite abashed by this time at her own temerity, and partly because Hugh Massinger, wicked man! was actually smiling a covert smile through the corners of his mouth at her youthful enthusiasm.

The pause sobered him. 'Miss Meysey,' he broke in, with unwonted earnestness, and with a certain strange tinge of subdued melancholy in his tremulous voice, 'I didn't mean to laugh at you. I really believe it. I believe in my heart every single word of what I said there. I believe a man—or a woman either—ought to choose in marriage just the one other special person towards whom their own hearts inevitably

lead them. I believe it all—I believe it without reserve. Money or rank, or connection or position, should be counted as nothing. We should go simply where nature leads us; and nature will never lead us astray. For nature is merely another name for the will of Heaven made clear within us.'

Ingenuous youth blushed itself crimson. 'I believe so too,' the timid girl answered in a very low voice and with a heaving bosom.

He looked her through and through with his large dark eyes. She shrank and fluttered before his searching glance. Should he put out a velvet paw for his mouse now, or should he play with it artistically a little longer? Too much precipitancy spoils the fun. Better wait till the *Echoes from Callimachus* had arrived. They were very fetching. And then, besides—besides, he was not entirely without a conscience. A man should think neither of wealth nor position, nor prospects nor connections, in choosing himself a partner for life. His own heart led him straight towards Elsie, not towards Winifred. Could he turn his back upon it, with those words on his lips, and trample poor Elsie's tender heart under foot ruthlessly? Principle demanded it; but he had not the strength of mind to follow principle at that precise moment. He looked long and deep into Winifred's eyes. They were pretty blue eyes, though pale and mawkish by the side of Elsie's. Then he said with a sudden downcast, half-awkward glance—that consummate actor—'I think we ought to go back to your mother now, Miss Meysey.'

Winifred sighed. Not yet! Not yet! But he had looked at her hard! he had fluttered and trembled! He was summoning up courage. She felt sure of that. He didn't venture as yet to lay siege to her openly. Still, she was sure he did really like her; just a little bit, if only a little.

Next morning, as she strolled alone on the lawn, a village boy in a corduroy suit came lounging up from the inn, in rustic *insouciance*, with a small parcel dangling by a string from his little finger. She knew the boy, and called him quickly towards her. 'Dick,' she cried, 'what's that you've got there?'

The boy handed it to her with a mysterious nod. 'It's for you, miss,' he said, screwing up his face sideways into a most excruciating pantomimic expression of the profoundest secrecy. 'The gentleman at our 'ouse—'im with the black moustarche, you know—'e told me to give it you into your own 'ands, if so be as I could manage to catch you alone anyways. 'E was very pertickler about your own 'ands. An' I needn't wait: there ain't no answer.'

Winifred tore the packet open with trembling hands. It was a neat little volume, in a dainty delicate sage-green cover—*Echoes from Callimachus, and other Poems*; by Hugh Massinger, sometime Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. She turned at once with a flutter from the title-page to the fly-leaf: A Mde Winifred Meysey; Hommage de l'auteur.' She only waited a moment to slip a shilling into Dick's hand, and then rushed up, all crimson with delight, into her own bedroom. Twice she pressed the flimsy little sage-green volume in an ecstasy to her lips; then she laid it hastily in the bottom of a drawer, under a careless pile of handkerchiefs and lace bodices.



She wouldn't tell even Elsie of that tardy much-prized birthday gift. No one but herself must ever know Hugh Massinger had sent her his volume of poems.

When Dick returned to the inn ten minutes later, environed in a pervading odour of peppermint, the indirect result of Winifred Meysey's shilling, Hugh called him in lazily with his quiet authoritative air to the prim little parlour, and asked him in an undertone to whom he had given the precious parcel.

'To the young lady 'erself,' Dick answered confidentially, thrusting the bull's-eye with his tongue into his pouched cheek. 'An' I give it to 'er be'ind the laylacs, too, where nobody in the world never seen us.'

'Dick,' Hugh Massinger said, in a profoundly persuaded and sententious voice, laying his hand magisterially on the boy's shoulder, 'you're a sharp lad; and if you develop your talents steadily in this direction, you may rise in time from the distinguished post of gentleman's gentleman to be a private detective or confidential agent, with an office of your own at the top of Regent Street. Dick, say nothing about this on any account to anybody; and there, my boy—there's half-a-crown for you.'

'The young lady give me a shillin' already,' Dick replied with alacrity, pocketing the coin with a broad grin. Business was brisk indeed this morning.

'The young lady was well advised,' Hugh answered grimly. 'They're cheap at the price—dirt cheap, I call it, those immortal poems—with an autograph inscription by the bard in person.—And I've done a good stroke of business myself too. The *Echoes from Callimachus* are a capital landing-net. If they don't succeed in bringing her out, all flapping, on the turf, gaffed and done for, a pretty speckled prey, why, no angler on earth that ever fished for women will get so much as a tiny rise out of her.—It's a very fair estate still, is Whitestrand. "Paris vaut bien une messe," said Henri. I must make some little sacrifices myself if I want to conquer Whitestrand fair and even.'

Paris vaut bien une messe, indeed. Was Whitestrand worth sacrificing Elsie Challoner's heart for?

#### H.M.S. VICTORY.

ROUND the memory of none of our old warships gather such hallowing associations as round those which have made the name of *Victory* a household word wherever the English tongue is spoken. Its mention calls up of their own accord in every Englishman's mind thoughts of Nelson and Trafalgar's 'crowning mercy;' but that should not be all. For its own sake, the name of *Victory* ought to have a hardly less weighty claim on our affectionate regard. Few of our battle-ships of renown, if any, can boast a name of such distinguished ancestry.

The *Navy List* gives as the distinguished services of ships named *Victory*, four of our proudest sea triumphs: 'Defeat of the Spanish Armada (flagship of Sir J. Hawkins), 1588. (Flag) *Victory* over the French off La Hogue

(1692). Jervis's victory over the Spanish off Cape St Vincent (1797). (Flag) Trafalgar (1805).' This is indeed a noble record, yet it is incomplete. 'The names of battles,' allowed as distinctions by the Admiralty, 'are those only of acknowledged victories, and where either the opposing forces have been equal or the enemy has been the stronger.' Such is the wording of the recent royal warrant authorising the Navy to record the war-service of each ship after the vessel's name in the *List*, just as the war-services of each regiment have always been recorded after its title in the *Army List*. But the official record of the battle-honours awarded to successive ships named *Victory* omits all mention of several important engagements in which they took a prominent part. Under Blake, Monk, Keppel, Howe, Hood, St Vincent, the *Victory* did the state right good service.

There have been five *Victories* in all in the service since 1570, when the first of the name was launched. As each, from old age, or whatever cause, was struck out of the list of the navy, a new one as speedily as possible seems to have been built, keeping unbroken the continuity of the series.

The first *Victory* is described in the *Archæologia* as being a vessel of eight hundred tons, with a complement of four hundred men—two hundred and sixty-eight seamen, one hundred soldiers, and thirty-two gunners—and armed with fifty-two guns. These last, before the ship disappears from the active list in 1624, were increased to sixty—the number carried by a first-rate of the period—and consisted for the most part of culverins (eighteen-pounders) and demi-culverins (nine-pounders), as broadside guns; with a few heavier pieces, set down as 'cannon-petro,' firing a stone shot of sixty-three pounds-weight, for long-range practice. As a 'shipp-royall of ye Queene's Navie,' and the third largest in the service, the *Victory*, in 1588, bore the flag of Rear-admiral John Hawkins in the fleet which defeated the Spanish Armada. For the distinguished share that his vessel took during the first four days of the running-fight up the Channel, Hawkins—while the fleet was still in the presence of the enemy, off the Sussex coast—received, along with Frobisher, the special honour of knighthood at the hand of the Lord High Admiral himself. Elizabeth, too, afterwards warmly commended the gallant services of the *Victory* during that fateful July week.

As to the subsequent history of this vessel, not much information can be gleaned anywhere. Contemporary documents record its name as the flagship in an abortive expedition to the Azores and coast of Spain in 1589, under the Earl of Cumberland, which resulted in the capture of a number of treasure-laden galleons and spice-ships from Manila. But sickness broke out on board, and the expedition had to return with less than half its numbers. The *Victory* seems to have been put out of commission after this and laid up in ordinary; for there is no mention of the vessel's name in any extant list of ships which took part in the numerous expeditions against the Spaniards under Drake, Essex, and Raleigh, between 1590 and 1603, though it is to be

found in the *Navy List* down to as late as 1624.

Phineas Pett, the great master-shipwright under James I. and his successor, in his manuscript autobiography records the launch at Woolwich, April 21, 1631, of the second *Victory*, a second-rate of five hundred and sixty tons, mounting fifty-two guns, and carrying two hundred and sixty men. This ship gained great distinction in Blake's various actions with the Dutch, notably in the indecisive engagement off Dover Roads, in November 1652, when with only thirty-seven sail he gave battle to Tromp's huge fleet of eighty. To the *Victory* in this fight is mainly due the credit of rescuing the admiral, whose flagship would have been overpowered by a number of the enemy's ships of heavier metal, had not the *Victory*, together with a sister vessel, the *Vanguard*, borne down and made the Dutchman sheer off. Again, in the next year the *Victory* bore a prominent share in Monk's great triumph off Camperdown, when the heroic Tromp met his death. So severely knocked about in these fights, however, had the brave little warship been, that its place in line of battle knew it no more. Though for thirty-six years the *Victory's* name still figures in the *Navy List*, the ship does not seem to have again been employed in active service. It is mentioned in the 'List of His Majesties Navie Royall' drawn up in 1660 at the instance of Pepys, on his entering on his duties at the Admiralty, as seaworthy; and again in 1668 in Pepys' own *Memoirs relating to the State of the Navy*, as in bad repair and laid up in harbour.

H.M.S. *Victory* the third—one of the finest hundred-gun first-rates of the time—seems to have been one of the new ships built by order of King William, about the year 1690. Its one recorded service is the battle off Cape La Hogue, May 19, 1692, as flagship to Admiral of the Blue, Sir John Ashly, commanding the lee squadron. From 1693, when the vessel would appear to have gone to sea for the last time, down to 1734, in the reign of George II., the *Victory* was kept laid up in ordinary, a poor old hulk, finally to be handed over to the breaker-up.

It is curious that from 1692 down to 1744, no mention is made in existing lists of the employment in the various naval expeditions of any of our first-rates. Not a single name of any vessel larger than a ninety-gun ship appears on the active list, though the *Britannia*, *Royal William*, *London*, *St Andrew*, *Royal Sovereign*, all of which fought at La Hogue with the *Victory*, one-hundred-gun first-rates, were new ships.

Of the fourth *Victory*, carrying one hundred and ten guns, little more is known than the story of the vessel's mysterious and tragic fate. Launched at Portsmouth in 1737, it was considered, during its brief seven years' existence, the premier flagship of the royal navy and the finest first-rate afloat. To judge by the splendid model of the vessel in the naval museum at Greenwich Hospital, this encomium was fully deserved, and is in no degree an exaggeration. The ship was the largest hitherto built, of nineteen hundred and twenty tons, one hundred and seventy-five feet in length of keel, and fifty and a half feet in breadth, by twenty feet deep. Under the flag of Admiral Sir John Balchen, a veteran of dis-

tinguished career, the *Victory*, with a fleet of thirteen other sail of the line, had been despatched, in September 1744, to raise the blockade of a flotilla of storeships for Gibraltar, which a powerful French squadron had shut up in the Tagus. After successfully performing his mission, and escorting the storeships into the Mediterranean, Balchen was on his way home, when, on October 3d, a terrific storm in the Channel scattered his ships. Some were dismasted, and others had to heave their guns overboard, but eventually all reached port in safety—except one. The flagship, with the venerable admiral (aged seventy-five), on board, and a crew of one thousand, including a number of midshipmen of the best families in England, was never heard of again. The *Victory* is supposed to have struck on the Gaskets, off Alderney; for during the night of the 3d, heavy distress-guns were heard in that direction by the islanders, who, however, owing to the violence of the storm, were powerless to render aid.

The fifth *Victory*, the last of the series, Nelson's immortal flagship, was laid down at Chatham in 1759, from designs by Sir Thomas Slade, and launched on May 17, 1765. Its dimensions were two thousand one hundred and sixty-four tons, one hundred and eighty-six feet length of keel, and fifty-two and a half feet of breadth by twenty-one and a half of depth; giving the *Victory* once more the distinction of being the largest and finest ship of war yet constructed. One point worthy of note in connection with the *Victory* is, that while the ship turned out to be perhaps the most perfect and smartest line-of-battle man-of-war England ever possessed, try as they might, our naval constructors never could manage to build another exactly similar or of equal efficiency. The great success which the *Victory* proved—as evidenced by her sobriquet of 'the smartest three-decker afloat'—is made still more remarkable when one considers the low ebb at which the art of naval construction was between 1740 and 1790. Our home-built vessels were surpassed, both for speed and manœuvring capabilities, by the ships of Spain and France during this period. Indeed, the best ships in the British service were either captured vessels, recommissioned under our flag, or else vessels built with slavish exactness on the lines of these. On the other hand, our own ships, when taken, were invariably rated in the enemy's service in a lower grade than they originally occupied.

The active career of the present *Victory* dates its beginning from 1778, when the *Victory* flew Admiral Keppel's flag in his encounter with the French fleet under the Comte D'Orvilliers, off Ushant. The odds were thirty-eight sail of the line on the French side against thirty on the British; yet D'Orvilliers shrunk from engaging. It was only when Keppel had at last gained the weather-gage, that the Frenchman could be brought to show fight. During the three hours' broadside-to-broadside fighting that ensued, until, under cover of the fast-closing night, D'Orvilliers slunk back into Brest, the *Victory* was in the thick of the fray, receiving very serious damage. Next, in 1782, the ship figures as flagship to Lord Howe—in the place of the ill-fated *Royal George*, which capsized at Spithead while fitting out for this very service—when he relieved

Gibraltar, and finally raised the long three years' siege. Ten years later, on the outbreak, in 1793, of the war with the French revolutionary government, the *Victory* was once more in commission with the Mediterranean fleet, and took part in the operations at Toulon as Lord Hood's flagship. From Toulon the British fleet proceeded to the reduction of the island of Corsica; and while cruising in these waters, the flagship, by a strange coincidence, had the narrowest escape of suffering the fate of Admiral Balchen's hapless *Victory* in a storm of unusual violence. But the stout-timbered old vessel managed to weather the tempest in safety, and rejoined her consorts off Ajaccio.

It was in this expedition that Nelson, as captain of the *Agamemnon*, sixty-four, first made the official acquaintance of the *Victory*. At Trafalgar, eleven years later, the *Agamemnon* was again serving in his command, joining the fleet, to Nelson's expressed satisfaction, just before the battle. Lord Howe's victory off Ushant on 'the glorious 1st of June' was fought by the Channel fleet. On Sir John Jervis taking over command of the Mediterranean fleet, he hoisted his flag in the *Victory*, destined to win more laurels in the great battle off Cape St Vincent in 1797. Nelson's triumph off the Nile was gained with a squadron of thirteen seventy-fours, detached 'on particular service' from the main Mediterranean fleet, which was lying at the time in the Tagus. So the glories of the 1st of August 1798 do not add another leaf to the *Victory's* chaplet. Indeed, this was the most unhappy period of the brave old battle-ship's career. From 1798 to 1801 the *Victory* was temporarily struck out of the *Navy List*, being employed as a convict hospital hulk, until the attention of the Admiralty was drawn to the fate of so favourite a ship.

We now come to the most illustrious portion of the *Victory's* long career. After being laid up at Portsmouth for some months after the truce of Amiens, the outbreak of hostilities in 1803 once again saw the *Victory* in commission, as flagship on the Mediterranean station. The command of the fleet was given to Nelson, with special instructions to watch the Toulon fleet. Throughout 1804 he kept cruising on and off the port, trying to induce the French admiral, Latouche-Treville, to come out and try the chances of battle; but all to no purpose, until Villeneuve had taken over the Toulon fleet, with positive instructions from Napoleon to put to sea at the first opportunity. In January 1805, taking advantage of a storm that drove the British fleet off the station, he contrived to do so; but Nelson was speedily on his track. Eastward he steered, on the lookout for the French, and then back to Gibraltar—but no Villeneuve was sighted. All through the cruise, every ship was kept prepared night and day for instant battle, ready to beat to quarters at any moment. One episode of the hunt after the French was the passage through the Strait of Messina, 'between Scylla and Charybdis,' by the whole British fleet, led by the *Victory*—'a feat unprecedented in naval history.' Nelson's justification to the Admiralty at home of the perilous exploit was that, 'although the danger from the rapidity of the current was great, yet the object was equally great.' From the Mediterranean, Nelson followed the French

to the West Indies, and then back to Europe. Twice during the long chase, the hostile fleets were on the point of anticipating Trafalgar: once in February, in the Mediterranean, off Sardinia, as they were about to cross each other's path, when a storm drove Villeneuve back to port for a hasty refit; the second time, in June, in the West Indies, off Port Royal, by a strange hap, exactly where Rodney had gained his glorious victory over De Grasse. Nelson was steering for this very spot, calculating that the French must pass close by there, when a report, which turned out to be false, that they had been seen somewhere else, drew him in another direction. The French all the time were in the neighbourhood of Port Royal. What the result of this last fight would have been, it is hard to guess, seeing that Nelson had only with him ten sail of the line and three frigates, against Villeneuve's eighteen sail of the line and ten frigates. That it would have gone hard with the *Victory*, for the French to a great extent identified the ship with Nelson himself, we have the hero's own evidence. 'The French,' he said, 'meant to have made a dead set at the *Victory*.'

Every one knows the story of the affecting scene on the beach at Southsea, when Nelson went on board the *Victory*, on September 14, 1805. The actual spot at which he stepped on to his barge was for long marked by a monument—the *Victory's* sheet-anchor, now a trophy on the Southsea Esplanade. But the scene on board the flagship when Nelson joined the fleet off Cadiz on the 28th of September was still more impressive and unprecedented than the departure from Portsmouth. 'The officers who came on board to welcome his return forgot his rank as commander-in-chief in the enthusiasm with which they greeted him.'

And now the 21st of October has come at last—

At the head of the line goes the *Victory*,  
With Nelson on the deck,  
And on his breast his orders shine  
Like the stars on a shattered wreck.

Leading the weather column, the *Victory* bore down on the combined French and Spanish fleets a little before mid-day. 'The action'—Collingwood's graphic despatch to the Admiralty reads—'began at twelve o'clock by the leading ships of the columns breaking through the enemy's line, the commander-in-chief [*Victory*] about the tenth ship from the van, the second in command [Collingwood himself, in the *Royal Sovereign*] about the twelfth from the rear; the succeeding ships breaking through in all parts astern of their leaders, and engaging the enemy at the muzzles of their guns.' As the *Victory*, in an almost dead calm, slowly forged down on the semicircle in which the combined French and Spanish fleets were drawn up, the ship was the mark for a heavy concentrated fire. 'The *Bucentaur*, eighty, on board of which, though without hoisting his flag, was Admiral Villeneuve, led off, firing the first shot at half-a-mile range. It fell short. A second, three minutes later, struck the water close alongside; the third went over the ship; the fourth through the topsail. A pause followed, and then, as if by prearranged signal, eight ships opened broadside after broadside on the *Victory*.

At six hundred yards off, the flagship's mizzen-top was shot away, and her wheel, so that the *Victory* had to be steered by the relieving tackles, from below. But though severely damaged in her hull, and with fifty men struck down before she replied with a single shot, the *Victory* continued her advance in scornful silence. The vessel's sails were in tatters, and her foremast tottering, as she reached the enemy's line, steering to pass astern of the *Bucentaur*. On this ship the *Victory's* energies were first concentrated, a carronade loaded with a sixty-eight-pound shot and five hundred musket-balls into the *Bucentaur's* stern-sheet cabin windows leading off. Then, as the mighty three-decker swept past, the whole larboard broadside, every gun either doubly or trebly shotted, was poured into the *Bucentaur*.

Through the darkening smoke the thunder broke  
O'er her deck from a hundred guns.

Rendered *hors-de-combat* at once, with twenty guns dismounted and four hundred of her crew killed outright, the hapless *Bucentaur* heeled over on one side, and lay with a deep list, helpless on the water, for the greater part of the action. The *Victory's* starboard broadside was divided between the *Redoutable*—which ship at once shut up her gunports, and henceforward only fired musketry from her tops—and Nelson's old antagonist, that 'Anak of the sea,' the *Santissima Trinidad*. How the flagship became locked to the *Redoutable* throughout the greater part of the action, and the story of Nelson's death, there is no need to repeat here.

The *Victory* bore the hero's remains to England; and at the earliest moment afterwards that the exigencies of the service permitted, in 1812, was withdrawn finally from the active list, and placed in thorough repair, to be preserved at Portsmouth as a memento of England's great sea-captain and his greatest triumph.

## HELEN'S ESCAPE.

### CHAPTER II.

FROM Paris besieged and terrorised, to quiet, pleasant Kensham was a change I duly appreciated. We led a very tranquil life—that is, my wife, my daughter Helen, and myself; for our neighbourhood, although within easy distance of London, had not yet given a sign of expanding into a fashionable suburb; we knew everybody, and very little served to excite and amuse us.

Five years passed since my life in the Rue de Douai; and Helen, at that time a bread-and-butter miss of awkward appearance, had blossomed into a pretty girl of eighteen. We had many friends about; but we were most intimate, Helen especially, with a gentleman named Corner, an Australian of great wealth, who lived with an aunt in an old-fashioned house not far from ours. When I say that John Corner was a fine-looking, black-bearded man, who stood six feet high, was an excellent athlete and a more than average scholar, I describe a man after whom many a fair Surrey lass sighed in vain, and whom I regarded as a very good husband in prospect for my Helen. I don't know if any form of betrothal had passed between them, but they were constantly billing

and cooing, and I was very satisfied with the arrangement, for, although I did not deem wealth a *sine quâ non* for my future son-in-law, I was not a rich man, and I would not have parted with her to one who could not keep her as I should have wished. When I saw that in the ordinary course of events nothing was likely to prevent Helen from becoming Mrs Corner, I determined that by no fault of mine should she prove to be unworthy of the man she married. So, as I abominated the system of sending girls to boarding-schools, I had her taught French and music and the usual curriculum at home by the best masters and mistresses obtainable.

They were a great trouble, these various professors, the French masters especially so. If I got one who promised well, just as he was getting into good swing, something—conscription or dying relations or *mal de pays*—would call him away. Willing and able men with provincial accents abounded; but, as I was a good French scholar myself, I determined that Helen should be Parisian or nothing. Finally, Monsieur Pontneuf arrived. I got him through the French Consulate in Finsbury Circus; and I was introduced to a military-looking man, broad in the shoulder, and thin in the flank, with small hands and feet, and a pleasing, although rather melancholy face of the intellectual Gallic type. He could speak but very little English; his references were exceptionally good; and, from a certain reserve and hauteur in his manner, I guessed at once that he was an imperialist gentleman driven to poverty and exile by the irony of Fate. My wife and Helen were charmed with him, and he very soon became established in our little world on a footing of almost familiar friendship. But he never took advantage of the favourable impression he had made; and after being with us three months, he was as punctilious in the respect he paid my wife and daughter as on the day of his introduction.

There was a tone of sadness about his reserve which interested me, and I felt sure that he was a man with a history, although, of course, I never presumed to broach the topic. Considering his nationality, he had a singular aversion to gaiety and social amusement, and firmly declined my repeated invitations for him to join in such rollicking diversion as our neighbourhood offered. He spent his leisure time in wandering about, cigar in mouth and hands folded behind his back, engaged in deep thought, and very soon obtained the nickname amongst the irreverent local youth of 'Dismal Froggy.'

It may be imagined that amongst ourselves we often talked about Monsieur Pontneuf, and tried to build up from our imaginations the history or the romance which had made him so solitary and pensive in his manner. At length Helen seemed to throw some light upon the matter, for she said at dinner one evening: 'Papa, what do you think I have found out about Monsieur Pontneuf?'

Of course I could not divine what it was.

'Why,' she replied, 'that he has a sweet-heart.'

'Impossible! Monsieur Pontneuf is fifty, if he is a day, and what girl is there about here who would fall in love with a middle-aged Frenchman?'



'I'll tell you who,' replied Helen—'Gabrielle, Miss Corner's French maid. I've seen them more than once together, and the servant from the Cedars brought Monsieur a note to-day.'

The notion seemed to me rather ridiculous that our solemn professor should have won the affection of the laughing, dark-eyed Gabrielle, who was, moreover, spoken of as the flame of John Corner's coachman; but the evidence of my own eyes soon proved that there was at anyrate some foundation for Helen's assertion. Upon more than one occasion of an evening I met Monsieur Pontneuf and Gabrielle together, although, from an English point of view, their deportment did not convey the idea that they were sweethearting; indeed, Gabrielle seemed to me to hold Monsieur Pontneuf somewhat in awe, for I overheard her address him as 'Monsieur,' and her manner was very deferential.

Now, it was an invariable habit of mine on a summer evening to take a stroll out of doors with my cigar or pipe, a habit I had contracted in Paris, where one never dreams of passing a close evening shut up in a warm house. A very favourite haunt of mine on these occasions was a path running along a feeble stream which we dignified by the title of 'the river,' leading to a sequestered summer-house apparently constructed for the express convenience of lovers, who, on Saturday or Sunday nights especially, patronised it largely. On other nights I generally had it to myself, and always stopped there for a few minutes to sentimentalise over the beauty of the moonlit scene spread before me. One night I became aware that it was occupied, from the sound of voices within, and as one of the voices was that of Monsieur Pontneuf, in spite of my abhorrence of eavesdropping, I paused and listened. He was speaking in French, and I managed to catch this scrap of conversation: 'Then, I am to understand that, so far as you know, he was in Paris in the year 1871, and that, when you entered his service, he was living near Amiens?'

'Yes, sir,' replied the voice of Gabrielle.

'Mind,' said Monsieur Pontneuf, 'don't let me catch you mistaking facts, or it will go very hard with you.'

'I am telling you truly, so far as I know, as I am a good Catholic,' replied the girl.

'He left Amiens hurriedly one night?' said Monsieur.

'Yes, sir. We were at supper in the kitchen when he came in, and told me to pack up as soon as I could, for we had to catch the English mail-train at ten o'clock.'

'Did he seem flurried or confused?'

'Not particularly, sir. He was pale and spoke rapidly—that was all.'

'I suppose you never heard him allude to a Madame Arosa?'

'You mean the old lady who?—'

'Yes, yes—of course I do.'

'Never, sir.'

'Of course nobody knows that you are in the habit of meeting me? At anyrate he does not?'

'I don't think so, sir; I am very cautious.'

There was a movement of feet in the summer-house, which warned me to get out of the way, so I slid behind a clump of bushes, and presently the two appeared in the moonlight.

'Report to me all you see and hear,' said Monsieur.'

'I will, sir.'

The Frenchman slipped something which chinked like coin into her hand, and they separated, he taking the path leading to the village, she going in the opposite direction towards the Cedars. From this conversation it was quite clear to me that whatever might be their relationship to one another, Monsieur Pontneuf and Gabrielle were not lovers; and, putting circumstances together, I made up my mind that my professor, like so many others in his calling, was a political refugee, either Napoleonist or Communist; and I knew very well that the French republican government, to whom both were equally hateful, was sparing no pains or expense to find out the whereabouts and to keep itself informed of the actions of all such offenders. Evidently, he was making use of the girl Gabrielle as a spy and informer; or it might even be that he was engaged in a plot against the government. During my artist life in Paris and London, I had been brought into constant contact with this class of gentry; and I knew that we should often shudder if we knew what sort of individuals make use of our free island as an asylum and live amongst us as harmless bread-winners. However, Bonapartist or Communist, criminal or innocent, Monsieur Pontneuf performed his duty to me satisfactorily and thoroughly; and it was not for me to pry behind the scenes of his life. I found John Corner in the smoking-room when I arrived at home; but I said nothing to him about what I had overheard during my walk.

'Well,' he said, 'you know I don't want to meddle in your affairs; but I've been rather put out and puzzled lately about a matter concerning which perhaps you can enlighten me; I mean about this Monsieur Pontneuf, who gives Helen her French lessons. Do you know anything about him?'

'Nothing more than that he was accredited to me by the French Consulate in London, and that he showed me very high testimonials.—But why do you ask?'

'Well,' he replied, 'because there is something going on between him and my aunt's maid Gabrielle. She has never asked so frequently for leave to go out of an evening as she has since Monsieur Pontneuf came here.'

'Perhaps there is a little affection between them.' Even to Jack Corner, whom I loved as my own son, I did not feel justified in confiding what I had chanced to overhear in the summer-house.

'I don't think so,' said Jack, shaking his head. 'He's a middle-aged man, and she's a mere girl of eighteen. Besides, she has never spoken to my aunt about it, and servant-girls always like to confide these little matters to mistresses who take an interest in their welfare. No; I think he is what we don't suspect him to be—a plotter perhaps, or a proscribed Communist leader.'

'It doesn't much matter if he is, so long as he performs his duties.'

'No. But I don't care about our maid being mixed up in this sort of business,' said Jack; 'for not only does it distract her attention from her duties, but it might involve us in unpleasantness.'

'Well, I don't know how we can find out; and I must admit that I fail to see how we can suffer by whatever two French people choose to concoct together.'

But it suddenly struck me that Jack must have seen me near the summer-house, for he was looking curiously at me, as much as to say: 'I should like to ask you about it, but I don't like to.' However, I was resolved not to say anything unless pressed, and changed the conversation. But I noticed that Jack seemed uncomfortable during the remainder of our talk, and I was puzzled to account for it. Our conversation at length turned on the trips abroad we were severally going to make during the next week—he to Switzerland, for a clamber amongst the High Alps; I and my ladies to Paris, for the important purpose of choosing the trousseau for Helen's wedding, which was to be celebrated in the late autumn.

But I saw that his mind was uneasy about Gabrielle and Monsieur Pontneuf, for, as we were bidding each other good-night at the door, he said: 'You keep an eye on Monsieur Pontneuf, or perhaps you will be astonished one of these fine days.'

'What do you mean, Jack?'

'Why, that I believe him to be nothing less than one of these Socialist dynamitards, and that he is in the thick of a plot against our own government here at home.'

#### PAGANINI.

TOWARDS the close of last century, an Italian woman of Genoa had a dream, and it seemed to her, as she afterwards told her little son, as though white-winged seraphs approached her couch and predicted the advent of a child whose skill as a violinist would be so transcendent that the very spirits of earth and air would seem to acknowledge his sway. The child was Nicolo Paganini—the destined Hercules of the violin—born February 18, 1784.

Ere the poor little lad could plainly speak, his days of toil began. No sooner could he hold a violin, than his father proved himself an inexorable taskmaster; the boy was urged to intense and even dangerous application; rare precocity was stimulated by privation of food, and thus the sickly child developed into a suffering man. It was in 1793 that Paganini made his first public appearance at Genoa, and played a series of variations on the air *La Carmagnole*, which had everywhere accompanied the victorious banners of the armies of the French Republic. Up to fifteen he remained quiescent under the yoke of his avaricious and tyrannical parent; but no sooner did he find in the exercise of his wondrous talent a means of delivery from the house of bondage, than he broke wildly from all restraint, and plunged into every form of dissipation, indulging especially in gambling, a universal vice in Italy, as it was indeed throughout the whole of Europe. Pitted against past masters of the craft, Paganini's means were rapidly exhausted. Jewels, watch, rings, even his fiddle, were disposed of; and he was indebted to the kindness of a French gentleman for the loan of a favourite Guarnerius, upon which he ever afterwards played, to enable him to fulfil an engage-

ment at a concert at Leghorn. On this occasion, Paganini performed a series of most difficult studies, which he had composed in still earlier years, and his skill was rewarded with triumphant applause. 'Never again,' replied the enthusiastic Frenchman, as the young artist hastened to return the violin, 'will I profane the strings which your fingers have touched; that instrument is yours.' This was the violin which Paganini bequeathed to his native town of Genoa, where it is still shown under a glass case in the municipal palace.

In 1805 Paganini accepted the position of director of music and conductor of the orchestra in the service of the Princess Maria, afterwards Grand-duchess of Tuscany, sister of Napoleon, and wife of Bacciochi; and it was at this period of his early career that he first elaborated many of those peculiarities, such as performances upon one string, which afterwards became so characteristic of his style. At Ferrara he had a narrow escape from being lynched. It had been arranged that a certain Signora Marcolini should take part in his concert, but at the last she left him in the lurch, and a danseuse with a pretty voice was good enough to come to the rescue. Nevertheless, the disappointed public hissed and hooted her down, and Paganini resolved to be avenged. At the close of the concert, he proposed to amuse the audience by imitating on the violin the sounds of various animals. Having reproduced the mewing of a cat, the barking of a dog, the crowing of a cock, &c., he suddenly burst forth into a perfect imitation of the donkey's bray; and the musician bowed once again, as he added with his cynical smile: 'This for those who hissed before and laughed.' The result was electrical. The Ferrarese—who enjoyed a widespread reputation for stupidity—took the joke as especially personal to themselves; in a moment the pit rose to a man, charged through the orchestra, scaled the stage, and would have killed Paganini, had he not precipitately fled. One evening, at a concert in Leghorn, he came upon the stage limping from the effects of a nail which had run into his foot, and there was some tittering among the audience. Just as he was beginning to play, the candles fell out of his music desk, and once more there was an uproar. Suddenly the first string broke, and the merriment waxed yet louder; but, to use the words in which he naively told the story of himself, 'I played the piece on three strings, and the sneers quickly changed into boisterous applause.'

Early in 1828, Paganini, at the request of Prince Metternich, for the first time visited Vienna. Men and women of all classes of society went mad about him: verses were poured forth in his honour, snuff-boxes and cigar-cases displayed his portrait; gloves, rings, stockings, coats, everything in the shop-windows was à la Paganini; a good stroke at billiards was called 'un coup à la Paganini'; dishes were named after him; and an enthusiastic cabman, who drove him to his concerts, besought of him permission to paint his cab in the Italian colours and to print upon it the words, 'Cabriolet de Paganini.' These extraordinary successes, however, served only to give new currency to the tales of crime and *diablerie*, which had so often circulated in connection with him. To atone for the base assassination of a rival, it was said that he had passed years within the

walls of a dungeon with nothing but his violin to mitigate the rigours of captivity. He was a captain of banditti—a deadly duellist—in league with the Prince of Darkness. In England, some of the people who thronged his passage to and from the theatre sought to discover, by touching him, whether he were really a being of flesh and blood; and an Italian lady who followed him one evening to the stage-door, where his cab stood in readiness, hesitated not to avow that his feet never touched the ground, and that he was borne away through the air in a chariot of fire, drawn by a pair of black horses! Yet all the stories told of him were not displeasing, for there were many who regarded him as an angelic being whose mission it was to vouchsafe to mortals some foretaste of the heavenly harmonies which will be hereafter; while others spoke of a choir of sweet-toned spirits hidden within the instrument as he played. One day, as he walked in the streets of Vienna, Paganini saw a poor boy scraping some Neapolitan airs before the windows of a great house. Instantly crossing the road, the great artist entered into conversation with him, and ascertained that he maintained a sick and widowed mother by his scanty earnings as an itinerant musician. Taking the boy's fiddle and bow, Paganini commenced to play. A crowd rapidly collected; and when he concluded the performance, he handed round the hat, and made a collection, which he presented to the young Italian, amid the cheers of all assembled, remarking as he did so: 'I hope I've done a good turn to that little animal.'

The singular personality of Paganini was displayed no less conspicuously in private than in artistic life. His existence alternated between excitement and exhaustion. He would sit sometimes for hours wrapped in moody silence, and at other times surrender himself to the wildest effervescence of gaiety. Full of contradictions, he was especially talkative when travelling; and though, latterly, the delicacy of his lungs affected his voice, he loved to talk loud and fast when the rattle of the wheels over the pavement was most deafening. He journeyed with the utmost speed from place to place, and to the charms of scenery or the strange sights of foreign towns was equally insensible. In the hottest weather, he would wrap a furred pelisse round him, and huddle himself up in a corner of the carriage, with every window closed. Arrived at his hotel, he would have all the windows open, and called it taking an air-bath. But he never ceased to anathematise the climates of Germany and France, and declared that Italy was the only country fit to live in. Soup or a cup of chocolate was all that he took before commencing a day's journey; and at night, a light supper, or oftentimes a cup of chamomile tea, was sufficient for his needs. The conqueror of Scinde himself had no greater contempt for a superfluity of baggage than Paganini. A coat, a few changes of linen, and a hatbox—a carpet-bag and a shabby trunk, wherein travelled his beloved Guarnerius, his jewels, and his money—constituted the whole of his impedimenta. His papers and accounts were thrust into a small red pocket-book in most admired disorder. He was all but ignorant of arithmetic; and his business calculations, though sufficiently accurate, were effected by methods purely original. Of general

knowledge, in fact, he had little or none; books to him were a *terra incognita*, and political events devoid of interest. To himself, he was the only important fact everywhere, and the newspapers he read merely for the sake of what might personally concern him. In his own quarters, Paganini maintained the strictest solitude, and lounged on the sofa the greater part of the day. Save at concerts, and occasionally at rehearsals, his violin was never touched; he had worked enough, he would say, and the season for repose was come.

Through the events of his German campaign, where Prague, Dresden, Berlin, and Warsaw were in succession visited, we may not follow him, but will rejoin him at Paris, where, on the 9th of March 1831, he gave his first concert at the Opera House. Paganini was then forty-seven years old, and his appearance was likened to that of some shadow from the demon world. A lean, gaunt, haggard figure, with wan thin face, framed in long black hair straggling down over his shoulders, and with a strange scornful smile hovering ever about his lips, he shuffled forward from the side-scenery to the footlights. The impression which he created on his first appearance is described as having amounted to a 'positive and universal frenzy,' and at the close of each piece the whole audience rose *en masse* to recall him.

About the middle of May, Paganini left Paris for London, and on the 3d of June he gave his first concert at the King's Theatre. Though the indescribable enthusiasm created by his playing is said to have been somewhat damped by the extravagant prices charged for admission, Paganini's tour through London and the provinces brought him a golden harvest; and it was calculated that, on one occasion, at Winchester, his own part of the performance, for which he received the sum of two hundred pounds, occupied just twenty-eight minutes. His greatest triumph, however, was probably achieved at Lord Holland's, when he was requested to improvise upon his violin the story of a son who, after murdering his father, leapt into a bottomless abyss with the girl who had refused to listen to the story of his love. Paganini stipulated for darkness; and so weird was the musical interpretation of the story that had been proposed to him, that many of the ladies fainted; and with the return of light, the scene in the concert chamber was likened to the appearance of a battlefield cumbered with the bodies of the slain! There is reason to believe that the proceeds of his performances in England amounted to twenty-four thousand pounds.

The remainder of his story is quickly told. Broken in health, and having acquired a large fortune by the exercise of his art, he bought, among other property in his native Italy, a charming country-seat near Parma, where, though he occasionally played at concerts chiefly for the benefit of the poor, he spent two or three years in comparative retirement. In 1836, however, he was induced to lend his name to the establishment of a gambling-room and concert-hall in Paris, called the Casino Paganini. The undertaking unfortunately proved a failure; and the fatigue of the journey which, in consequence of law proceedings, he was compelled to make to Paris, without doubt hastened his end. Fearing the effect of a northern winter, his medical

advisers recommended him to return to the south; and after a painful journey through France, he at length arrived at Nice, where, on the night of the 27th of May 1840, he quietly passed away. The last evening of his life, he would have no light in the room; but on suddenly awaking out of a peaceful sleep, he drew aside the curtains of his bed and gazed forth into the unclouded glory of an Italian night. His window was open, and the whispering of the breeze among the trees seemed to rouse within him the longing to render back again to nature somewhat of the sweet sensations she was bestowing upon him in that final hour. Yet, though the moon had risen, and was pouring a flood of radiance across the bed, to him everything seemed in shadow, for his eyes were dim. He extended his hand and grasped the beloved violin—the faithful friend which had so often been the soother of his troubles—and strove to bring some sound out of the instrument. But the magic power had for ever quitted his fingers, and falling back upon his pillow, he expired.

He left eighty thousand pounds, together with the title of Baron (conferred upon him in Germany), to his only son, Achille Paganini, the offspring of his union with Antonia Bianchi, a singer with whom he had long since quarrelled. Life for Paganini had indeed been a 'fitful fever,' and it seemed as though even his remains were not to be permitted to 'sleep well.' He died, it seems, unshriven and unfortified by the last sacraments of his Church; and he was, in consequence, refused burial in consecrated ground by the Bishop of Nice. The body was therefore transferred by sea from the lazaretto of Villa Franca to a country-seat in the neighbourhood of Genoa. Finally, owing to the strange and ghostly sounds—wailings of the unsatisfied spirit of the great musician—which it was affirmed were heard by night proceeding from the coffin, his friends obtained permission to inter the corpse near the village church adjoining his favourite residence, the Villa Gajona. It was not, however, until five years after his death, and then without any display, in conformity with the orders of government, that this tardy tribute was rendered to the remains of the immortal Paganini.

### PARSON VENABLES' ADVENTURE.

#### IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. II.

Mr and Mrs Venables drove on for a little way in silence. It was growing cold, and a thick rime appeared on the vicar's beard and hair and on his wife's shawl. Doubtless, Charles's tail and mane were completely silvered with it; but for some time past the pony had been hidden from the sight of the driver.

'If that was the great quoit, we should be near the cross-roads,' said the vicar.—'Hark! what is that noise?'

They both listened intently, and distinguished a man's voice, calling, as it seemed, to some animals. Judging by the loudness of the sound, it was not distant from them.

'It is probably Collins driving home his goats,' said the vicar. 'I wish we could make him hear us. Hardly any weather baffles him; the downs

are so familiar to these men who have been bred on them.—Halloo! Collins—hilliho!'

He shouted at the full power of his voice, and waited for an answer. An indistinct halloo came in reply, mingled with the barking of a dog; but the sound was evidently more distant than before, and in a moment it ceased altogether.

Mrs Venables began to whimper. 'I didn't think Collins would have left us like this!' she sobbed. 'Cruel man! he may find us dead in the morning.'

'Pooh, pooh!' said the vicar cheerfully; 'we shall be all right presently.—Here we are at the cross-roads, I declare. Now, we have only to turn up here and we shall be at home presently. Put your other shawl about you, my dear.—There! Now you are quite comfortable again.'

But, oddly enough, Charles declined to turn up the cross-road. He resisted stoutly every effort which his master made on the reins; and at last, by a strong tug of his muscular neck, he actually got his head round in the opposite direction, and trotted away at a sharp pace towards the quarter whence they had come.

'He's running away!' screamed the old lady. 'Hold him in! Pull him up!'

'What the mischief is he up to now?' exclaimed the vicar. 'I can't pull him up, my dear; his muscles are far stronger than mine.'

They were indeed; the bull-necked little beast had the power of ten ponies in his chest and loins, when he chose to put it forth; and a much stronger man than the vicar would scarcely have succeeded in holding him in, when his mind was bent so obstinately on running away as it was at this moment. He rattled along at a great pace; never had he been known to go so fast; stone hedges and granite quoits would doubtless have appeared to fly behind, had it been possible to see them.

'It is useless,' said the vicar, laying down the reins in calm despair. 'I have no power over him. After all, animals are often much wiser than men; he may know better than we where he is going.'

Mrs Venables cowered closely to her husband's arm. 'I am afraid he will run up against something,' she said, in a timid whisper.

'I don't think he will,' rejoined the vicar; 'he is a sensible beast on the whole.'

It was not long before Charles came to a dead stop, so suddenly as to shake his master and mistress violently in their seats.

'Where are we now?' inquired the vicar, petulantly. 'Get on, you brute!' And he flicked Charles sharply with his whip. But Charles refused to stir: he stood like a solid rock, and neither threats nor entreaties had the smallest effect on him. The whip was equally ineffective; and the vicar turned towards his wife with a mournful shrug of the shoulders.

'He knows he is in some dangerous place, Theophilus,' said the old lady. 'Oh, I am so terrified! I daresay he is standing on the brink of an old mine-shaft. Don't beat him any more; he may throw us down some awful pit.'

'There's no knowing where he may have brought us, certainly,' the vicar admitted; and with that relapsed into silence.



Presently, Charles began to give signs of a most uncomfortable restlessness. He stamped impatiently on the ground, whinnied loudly, and jerked himself more than once in the shafts in such a way as to suggest very disagreeable possibilities in the event of his being really on the brink of some precipice.

'I don't like this,' said Mr Venables. 'I think I must unharness him; he will do some mischief, break the shafts, or upset us, perhaps.'

'Do be careful!' entreated his wife, seeing him preparing to dismount. 'I wish you would not get out.'

'Of course I shall be careful.' The answer came in an irritable tone, for the vicar's temper was beginning to give way under these accumulated trials. His fingers were chilled, and the straps and buckles slippery with the rime; but he succeeded at last in freeing Charles, who gave a snort of relief, and instantly trotted away without, apparently, the smallest thought for the safety of his companions in misfortune.

'Oh, he's gone!' exclaimed Mrs Venables, whom this desertion by their dumb companion seemed to strike with additional dismay. 'What on earth shall we do?'

'We had better shout, I suppose,' said her husband, getting into his seat again; 'there's a possibility, of course, that some one may hear us.'

They shouted together; the old lady's thin piping contrasted oddly with her husband's stentorian bellows. There was no reply, save that when the noise of their voices ceased, there appeared to be a mournful murmuring in the air, but that was probably imagination. They waited a few minutes and then called again more loudly; and this time there was an extraordinary answer. A loud rattling rending sound broke the stillness, there was a sudden crash, and a sound of voices: a light flashed; something hard and metallic was flung to the ground at no great distance from them; and then, with a scuttering of feet, everything died away into silence again.

Mrs Venables was too much frightened to speak; she clung closely to her husband's arm; and he himself was too much disconcerted for a moment to venture on speech.

'As to what that may have been, I can't venture a guess,' he said. 'It seems likely that we shall be here for some time, however. You had better put on all the wraps we can find.'

He rummaged about under the seat, and found a heavy carriage rug, which, when drawn up over them, promised to protect them very fairly from the cold.

'Come, it might be worse,' said the parson. 'I don't remember spending a night out of doors before: it will be a new experience.—Are you warm, my dear?'

Mrs Venables was very warm; in fact, she was clothed in so many shawls that nothing short of Arctic frost could have reached her. She was in fact comfortable enough; and as everything around was now profoundly quiet, she soon began to yield to the drowsiness induced by the excitement of the last hour. The parson made her as comfortable as he could, and sat thoughtfully considering their position. Reflection brought out no new facts. Nor did it offer any better solution of the existing difficulty, than that they

should sit still until something happened—for instance, until the day broke; though the unpleasant thought suggested itself that even then, unless the fog had lifted, their position would not be improved.

The situation was disagreeable enough; but the parson, who was not devoid of philosophy, was beginning to nod over it, while Mrs Venables was snoring loudly, when a step was heard by the side of the wheel, a light was flashed into the vicar's eyes, and a rough voice exclaimed: 'Why, master, what be 'ee sitting here for?'

'It's Hugh!' cried Mrs Venables, joyfully awaking in an instant from her slumber. 'O dear Hugh! how did you find us?'

'Ay, Hugh, where are we?' the vicar broke in. 'Did you come out to look for us? What a good fellow you are! Are you sure you know the way back?'

'Way back!' repeated Hugh contemptuously. 'Back where?'

'Where? Why, home!—to the vicarage, to be sure! Where else could we want to go at this time of night?'

'And where do 'ee think you be, then?' asked Hugh, still more contemptuously than before.

'Now do, like a good fellow, ask no more questions,' said the vicar, getting down from his seat; 'but show us the way back, unless it is too far to walk.'

'Well, I never knew the like of this!' said Hugh; and with that he laid his hand on his master's shoulder and guided him a few paces in advance of where the shafts of the pony-carriage touched the ground. 'There!' he said gruffly, 'what be that?'

'That's a wall, it seems,' said the vicar, considerably mystified.

'Ay,' said the man; 'and what be that?'

'A gate, as I live!' shouted the vicar—'my own gate, the vicarage gate.—Anna, we are at home!'

'Do you mean to tell me, Theophilus,' said the old lady in a tremulous voice, 'that I have been sitting screaming myself hoarse, and catching my death of cold at my own gate all the time?'

'I am afraid you have, my dear.—Ho, ho! what a joke this is!—You mustn't tell Hartle, Anna.—Let me help you out.'

'I can get out very well by myself,' said Mrs Venables testily; 'and as for helping me, you might have thought of that an hour ago, and saved me from this ridiculous position.'

'My dear,' said the vicar, rather dismayed at the suddenness of this attack, 'I did all I could.'

'Oh, I don't know,' his wife answered impatiently. 'We shall be the laughing-stock of the neighbourhood.—And what has become of Charles, I should like to know?'

'Yes, Hugh, what has become of Charles?' repeated the vicar, relieved to have the opportunity of changing the subject.

'In the paddock,' replied Hugh. 'Came in forty-five minutes ago—so the boy says; and he'd have told me at once, if he hadn't had a fool's head atop of his shoulders.'

'So! No wonder the poor beast was restive!' commented the parson. 'I shouldn't have sat so quietly myself, if I had known my supper was within fifty yards of me.'

As they stood on the doorstep waiting for an

answer to their summons, Mrs Venables whispered to her husband: 'We needn't tell Belinda.' The parson nodded, and at that moment the door was opened by a trim maidservant, and Miss Belinda came running out into the hall.

'Oh, Uncle Theophilus!' she cried—'oh, Aunt Anna, I have been so frightened!'

'Frightened, you silly child—what at?' asked Mrs Venables.

'There were such horrid shrieks at the garden gate,' said Miss Belinda; 'you never heard such howls and bellowings.'

'Some one of the farmers going home from the inn,' said the parson. 'What is there so terrible in that?'

'O no!' said his niece. 'They were not human voices—they were much too harsh; they were like the screaming of fiends.'

The vicar looked at his wife as if to satisfy himself what she thought of this plain speaking about her vocal powers.

'Stuff and nonsense, Belinda!' said the old lady angrily. 'I can't listen to such trash. How could there have been any fiends at the gate of the vicarage?'

'Oh, but there were,' Miss Belinda persisted; 'for Jane said she would go out and see what it was, though I advised her not; and she went as far as the gate with a lantern; and there she saw a hearse with plumes on it, and she was so frightened that she dropped the lantern and ran back, and we barred the door and bolted it.'

'Now, don't let us have any more of this,' said the vicar decisively. 'Your head is too full of these things, Belinda; and Jane is as foolish as you are. Let us have our supper, and pray, oblige me by forgetting this nonsense.'

And the truth about Parson Venables' adventure is now for the first time made generally known.

#### THE FADING OF PHOTOGRAPHS.

THE family album upon the drawing-room table is a never-failing subject of interest to visitors, and among individuals who lack original ideas, forms an agreeable subject of conversation in place of that of the weather. Of late years, however, there is more diffidence in placing it in prominent positions for the ready examination of waiting friends, the sad-coloured pictures of 'the hue of a November fog in Cheapside, or a bad piece of gingerbread spoilt in the baking,' being at variance with average ideas of artistic elegance. A more serious aspect of the case is the gradual discoloration or fading of the likenesses of members of the family who have passed away by death, raising the question in the minds of survivors what is to be done to preserve those lineaments for future inspection ere it be too late.

When the white parts of an ordinary photograph begin to turn yellow, that photograph is doomed unless immediate efforts be made to preserve it, and those efforts may not always be successful. Treatment with a weak solution of bichloride of mercury, under the hands of a skilful photographic practitioner, is one of the best methods of making the attempt; this may arrest decay, but will not restore the likeness to the condition of a first-rate photograph. Bichloride of mercury, or corrosive sublimate, is highly

poisonous, and is best left alone by the uninitiated. A better way of preserving the memento is to send the photograph to a platinum-printing or carbon-printing firm of photographers, in a sufficiently large way of business to keep upon their premises artists skilled in the use of the brush and pencil. Their usual plan, then, is to obtain upon glass or paper an enlarged positive copy of the fading photograph: this copy is 'retouched,' that is to say, worked upon by hand so as to remove obvious defects due to decay or to original bad work; a negative is taken from the perfected positive, and from this negative any number of copies may be printed by photographic means in permanent carbon pigments or in platinum black. To obtain the positive already mentioned, a primary negative has to be taken, so that two negatives are necessitated by the process, both of which, as well as the positive, are usually worked upon somewhat by the hand of the artist; the method of getting a good permanent photograph from a bad fading one is therefore complicated, and requires skill.

In the carbon process, carbon or other suitable permanent pigment is spread upon paper or glass along with solution of gelatine and of bichromate of potash or ammonia: where the light acts upon this surface through the negative, the decomposition of the salt renders the gelatine insoluble; consequently, when the paper is afterwards placed in warm water, the gelatine unacted upon by light dissolves off in company with its pigment, thus leaving the white paper exposed; but where the light has acted, the gelatine and pigment remain to form the shadows of the picture. These are the broad principles of the process, omitting various practical details which it would exceed present limits to particularise. The other permanent process, in which the dark parts of the picture are formed of platinum black, gives the most durable pictures known, platinum being a metal which has more power than gold of resisting change under atmospheric and other influences; indeed, platinum black is infinitely more permanent than the paper upon which it is printed. In some cases, either from badly prepared sensitised paper, or from faults in the photographic manipulations, platinum prints have been known to turn yellow in the whites under the influence of sulphuretted hydrogen; such discoloration has sometimes been subsequently removed by the application of chemical reagents, without the dark parts of the picture having been affected all through the operations. There are methods of taking photographs in silver which have exactly the appearance of platinotypes, so that an expert cannot always tell the difference without the application of chemical tests; these black and engraving-like silver prints are in all probability much more permanent than the ordinary photographs used for the stocking of albums.

The best photographers know how to produce permanent photographs, if their patrons insist upon having them; but such pictures have not usually the appearance of ordinary photographs, unless the carbon process with a pigment of the requisite colour be employed. Messrs Gêruzët, Bros., of Brussels, photographers to the Queen of the Belgians, have for a long course of years issued to the public none but carbon photographs,

even of such small dimensions as *cartes de visite*. The colour of the pigment has been such that unskilled purchasers cannot tell that they are not ordinary photographs; after lapse of years such likenesses preserve their pristine beauty, whilst silver prints alongside them in the same albums fall into the sere and yellow leaf.

On turning over the leaves of any album, those photographs whose life is fairly on the wane may be at once recognised by a sickly yellow colour taking the place of the whites of the picture. To detect this change in its incipient stages, the whites of the photograph should be compared with the cardboard of the leaves of the album; both should be equally white. First-rate photographers think it their duty to turn out pictures of this class with pure whites in the highest lights; second-rate photographers commonly turn out pictures dingy in the high lights and feeble in the shadows, faults usually due to bad printing or bad negatives.

Common photographs consist of silver in a more or less reduced state upon a film of albumen coagulated by the chemicals through which it has been passed. The greatest enemies of the permanence of such prints are: (1) Traces of chemicals not fully washed out of the print by the photographer. (2) Damp. (3) The action of sulphur or its compounds. The last of these agencies of degradation is the most difficult to avoid; the albumen itself contains sulphur as an essential constituent; it is this sulphur which attacks silver egg-spoons. The air of towns contains sulphurous gases from drains, and among the products of the combustion of coals and gas. Bronze powder, used instead of gold for printing addresses upon some of the cards upon which photographs are mounted, has sometimes proved a prolific cause of local fading, the bronze dust falling upon the picture, and in course of time producing white spots thereon, when the powder contains sulphide of tin. A story is told of a young man asking a photographer not to mount his likenesses upon the ordinary trade cards of the establishment, as he did not wish his friends to see the cheap prices printed thereupon. The photographer, therefore, mounted the pictures upon the backs instead of the fronts of the cards. In due time the bronze-printing did its work, and the low price paid became visible in white letters upon the face of the photograph itself.

All the conditions governing the fading of ordinary photographs are not yet fully understood; but pictures of this class rarely remain unchanged in appearance for twenty years, and in no instance, probably, are they permanent in a historical sense; they serve but temporary purposes. At their advent, the public disliked their chocolate colour; by force of long familiarity therewith, there is now, on the other hand, a certain amount of prejudice against photographs in black and white, but this feeling is diminishing year by year, especially among the more cultured classes, so that at Photographic Exhibitions engraving-like pictures are steadily on the increase. The remedy for the fading of the family photographs rests in the hands, or rather in the heads, of the general public more than anywhere else; if the public demand permanent likenesses in platinum, or in carbon or other permanent pigment, and see that they get them, the supply

will follow the demand, and the household album will then no longer suggest by its colours a collection of leaves of trees gathered in the autumn season.

### FROM THE UNDER-WORLD.

ONLY a few days ago, and the Old Priory Garden was wrapped in its snowy mantle; the trees were bare and black, or covered with hoar-frost; the earth hard and ice-bound; the half-hardy herbage crumpled up and brown, or hanging limp and dejected-looking on their shrivelled stalks; even the holly and ivy had lost their crisp glossy freshness; and the yew drooped sadly in the biting hail and cutting east wind, rendered all the more insidious by an hour or two of brilliant sunshine in the middle of the day, that would melt the frost and snow off the turf in patches, to be all the more easily a prey to the bitter wind, and rendered sapless and lifeless.

Round every corner comes this Eastern fiend, lifting up every dry leaf, and penetrating to the inmost recesses of the tender under-shoots. Nothing is safe from its fierce treachery. Here, it strikes down the hale middle-aged man with an acute attack of pleurisy; there, a happy, well-cared-for child is barely pulled through the sudden sharp touch of croup; and scores of the 'uncared-for' atoms of humanity are not pulled through, but are choked out of existence without help.

Now, an aged individual creeps out of doors into the pleasant sunlight. As long as he keeps in the shelter of the south wall, he is fairly safe; but an old acquaintance greets him, and in a fatal moment he turns the corner of the wall, perhaps stands two minutes talking. Suddenly, a slight shiver seizes him and thrills through his frame; he retreats hastily homewards. 'Too late.' And his friend passes onward with an undefined foreboding that the man is going to be ill; little thinking that, in the idle moments of friendly gossip, the east wind has chilled the lifeblood, and checked the already too languid circulation in the aged veins. Job says: 'The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth;' and again in Hosea: 'The east wind increaseth desolation;' and over there in 'God's-acre' are newly made graves, that have been filled by the cruel ravages of this unrelenting monarch, over whose occupants might be fitly written the above epitaphs. When gentle Charles Kingsley wrote his ode to the *Bluff North-easter*, did he think the 'wind of God' would be his own death-warrant? But so it was: the disease that carried this gentle, loving soul to his grave was intensified and aggravated by the baleful effects of a sudden chill.

But at last—at last this arch-enemy has departed; and though a chill rawness is in the air, still there is a strange subtle difference to the senses. Waking up in the very earliest dawning, your ears are saluted with the musical trickling of water down the spouting, the soft fall of rain on the roof, and sudden little wet dashes against the window. The wind has a low hollow murmur

in the distant elms, and swirls round in fitful gushes, that have a gentler cadence. As you lie still and listen gladly to these welcome sounds, you are conscious of breathing easier and taking deeper respirations before dropping off into a more restful and life-giving sleep. Strangely enough, you sleep an hour later than usual. But to what a different world you wake up! After another twenty-four hours' rain, and you go out of doors in the wet glistening morning, what do you find? That a thrush is singing its sweet shrill melody from the top of an apple-tree, whose bare and apparently lifeless branches have already felt the quickening thrill of the rising sap; and looking closely, you find tiny points of vivid crimson in every twist and turn of the boughs. The brown sheaths of the pear have opened, revealing the tender white cone of the coming blossom. The harder fruit-trees have made best use of the time, and are sprouting rapidly. You feel a puff of the south wind; and along the old wall, from the 'dark under-world,' have appeared the pale snowdrop; and in another corner, half-a-dozen golden gems of the winter aconite peep out cheerfully. The daisies have not yet dared to lift their ruffled faces; but the turf has a brighter appearance, and a sweet keen smell that is simply delicious. Whence comes this vivifying principle? From the black earth, causing all nature to shine forth at a breath of the south wind, that rives even the zone of the winter king.

He who holds the world in the hollow of His hand has seen fit for some of His children to 'go over to the majority;' but in the returning beauty and freshness and joyousness of nature we can also discern 'the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us.'

#### A NEW MODE OF ELECTRIC WELDING.

It has long been known, says the *Times*, that the most refractory metals are fusible in the electric arc, and of late the fact has been applied to the reduction and welding of metals. In the welding process of Professor Elihu Thompson, of Boston, United States, the joint to be welded is traversed by an alternating current of electricity strong enough to fuse the metals together. But in the new process of Dr Bernardo, of St Petersburg, a continuous current from a charged accumulator is employed. The metals to be welded are connected to the negative pole of the accumulator, and a carbon pencil, such as is used in the electric arc lamp, is connected to the positive pole of the accumulator. The consequence is that when the carbon pencil is brought into contact with the joint, and then withdrawn, an arc is started between them, and the metals of the joint are fused in its intense heat until they run together. Carbon blocks are in certain cases used to retain the molten metal in its place, and a little sand is also employed as a flux. By these means boiler-plates can be mended *in situ*, blowholes in castings filled up, and iron rods jointed together. To weld two pieces of  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch boiler-plate, forty cells of the accumulator joined 'in series' and three 'in parallel' are taken to supply the current; and a 1-inch carbon pencil in a portable holder is used to strike and maintain the arc.

The power of the latter is regulated by the number of cells employed. The accumulator of Dr Bernardo has plates made of strip-lead, he having found that cells with paste in the plates do not stand the strong currents which he requires.

#### A DREAM-MAIDEN.

THE dawn of day is sweet and still,  
And fair the light of noon,  
When, wrapped in purple haze, the hill  
Dreams through a golden June.

But still the hour I love the best  
Comes when the sun has rolled  
His glowing chariot where the West  
Throws wide her gates of gold;

For then I seek the land of dreams,  
And all the world to me  
Falls faint and far as songs of streams  
To one who hears the sea.

Where low above the river-shore  
The rustling branches swing,  
The lady of my dreams once more  
With me is wandering.

I see her bright hair's sunny gleam,  
Her lithe form's slender grace;  
But even in my dearest dream,  
I never see her face.

Far over all that pleasant land  
Her happy voice is borne.  
Sweeter than waves along the strand,  
Or winds among the corn.

The sea-gull stays his flight to hear;  
The brook his babble stills;  
And on the mountain-side, the deer  
That subtle music thrills.

Yet all the magic of her song,  
Far sweeter than the birds  
That sing the summer woods among,  
For me has never words.

But still I follow where she goes,  
Until the cruel day  
Steals down the path of pearl and rose,  
To bear my love away.

Time brings, I know, an hour for me  
When dreaming will be past,  
When I my lady's face shall see,  
And hear her words at last.

Oh, that the happy day would rise,  
When she for whom I wait  
Will come from the dim land that lies  
Beyond the Ivory Gate!

D. J. ROBERTSON.

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